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Quiz Winners and a New Quiz

March 13, 2009 in [Frivolous Friday](#) by [The China Beat](#) | [1 comment](#)

We received many correct answers to [last week's Frivolous Friday quiz](#). For the prize of a copy of *China's Brave New World—And Other Tales for Global Times*, Jeff Wasserstrom asked readers to guess which two people he had in mind to answer [this question](#): "If you could bring back to life, for a day, two people you've written about who are now dead, and ask them questions about what Shanghai was like then, who would they be and what would you ask them?" The clues were:

- 1) Both people were cosmopolitan women who spent time in both China and the United States.
- 2) Though only one was an American, each went to college in the U.S., attending in each case schools that had "W"s at the start of one part of the institution's name.
- 3) One had a husband who studied in Hong Kong and then was later detained in London, while the other had a husband who was imprisoned in Hong Kong and then later taught in London.
- 4) One was played on screen by Maggie Cheung.
- 5) One had a husband whose name began with the letters "Cha," while the other had a father whose name began with those same letters.

The correct answers were **Emily Hahn** and **Song Qingling**. We thought we might get more than one correct answer, so as a tie-breaker, Jeff added these subjective questions:

- 1) What's a question that it would be particularly interesting to have these two people discuss (if they were brought back to life)?
- 2) Can you think of a pair of people you think would be more interesting to quiz about Shanghai's past than the two Jeff had in mind?
- 3) Which actress should play the member of the pair Jeff is thinking of who, as far as we know, has not yet had a movie made of her life (but probably should have one made of it someday)?

The judging was incredibly tough, as all respondents had interesting answers to these questions. We have selected this response as our winner:

1. I would be interested in hearing Hahn and Song discuss Hahn's portrayal of Song in her book *The Soong Sisters*. As a secondary topic, it would be great if both women discussed Sterling Seagrave's book *The Soong Dynasty*.
2. The two people I would love to ask about Shanghai's history would be Du Yuesheng and Sterling Fessenden.
3. The historical actress who could best portray Hahn's combination of wit, feminism, and glamour would be Myrna Loy—I could just imagine Loy with Mr. Mills on her arm at some swank gathering. If I had to choose a living actress to play Hahn, although Loy would be my first choice, it would probably be Jennifer Jason Leigh (think *Hudsucker Proxy*).

The winning answer was submitted by **Lane J. Harris**, and he will be receiving his award in the mail shortly.

Evan Osnos sent us a note (though he excluded himself from the competition due to "[unfair interest in the subject](#)") nominating his choice for actress in a movie of Emily Hahn's life: "Hahn must be played

by Naomi Watts, because Watts starred in the remake of King Kong, so she has experience working alongside monkeys, as did Hahn, e.g. gibbons.” (For instance, see Hahn’s book [Eve and the Apes](#).)

Other proposals for the actress nominated to play Hahn included Meryl Streep (Out of Africa, redux? She received three nominations), Katharine Hepburn, Cate Blanchett, and Maggie Gyllenhaal.

We also wanted to share a few “honorable mentions” from respondents with you.

“Most Substantive Question” for Song and Hahn:

How real were the newfound freedoms for women in China at the time? (Submitted by Nick Wang.)

“Most Original Pairing of Those to Bring Back to Life” (with bonus points for one being fictional!):

Kyo Gisors, Malraux’s invented organizer of the 1927 rising against Chiang Kaishek in Man’s Fate, and Eugene Chen, the Trinidad-born journalist and secretary of Sun Yat-sen. (Submitted by Donald Sutton.)

“Most Touchingly Uxorious” (and describing the person who Jeff would certainly also see get the role in real life if the film were to be made—Myrna Loy, alas, being dead, and Naomi Watts having gotten to make her Shanghai film already):

(To #3): My wife. (Submitted by Robert Bickers.)

“For Giving Jeff Second Thoughts” about the pair he would choose to bring back to life (as seeing what Emily Hahn and the cosmopolitan Communist activist Pan Hannian made of one another is a fascinating notion):

Pan Hannian / H. Shippe (Moses Grzyb / Asiaticus) (Submitted by Thomas Kampen)

Because we (and you too, based on your answers), had such fun with this, we thought we’d do it again. Please send your answers to *China Beat* Editor Kate Merkel-Hess at kate@uci.edu. The winner of this quiz will receive a copy of the forthcoming *China in 2008*, signed by as many of the book’s contributors as make it to the [Association for Asian Studies meeting in Chicago](#), as well as Kate Merkel-Hess and Ken Pomeranz (who won’t be making the trip).

Please send answers to these questions:

1. **The Prettiest** (photo of China you can find on the web—send link or the photo itself, but please include link to where you found it so we can credit appropriately)

2. **The Wittiest** (title of a China book, article or blog post)

3. And **the Grittiest** (your choice for best muckraking journalist who worked the China beat, past or present)

No one is exempt (meaning, we encourage those who have submitted before to do so again!) We’ll announce the winner next week.